

STAN GETZ

A LIFE IN JAZZ: A MUSICAL BIOGRAPHY



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File under Jazz



"It's like a language. You learn the alphabet, which is the scales. You learn sentences, which are the chords. And then you talk extemporaneously with the horn. . . . I love to talk just off the top of my head." The speaker is Stan Getz, and of course no one better exemplified the art of playing jazz than the master tenor saxophonist.

- 1 **Night Rider** 3:56
from the jazz-plus-strings classic, *Focus*
- 2 **Billie's Bounce** 7:57
with J. J. Johnson and Oscar Peterson
- 3 **Corcovado** 4:14
(*Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars*)
from the best-selling bossa nova LP *Getz/Gilberto*
- 4 **Litha** 8:28
accompanied by Chick Corea from the famous *Sweet Rain* LP
- 5 **You're Blasé** 3:56
with first lady of song Ella Fitzgerald
- 6 **What Is This Thing Called Love?** 9:47
from Getz's 1987 European tour
- 7 **Hymn of the Orient** 2:53
a great collaboration with guitarist Jimmy Raney
- 8 **Summertime** 6:57
a version to rank with the best in modern jazz
- 9 **I'm in Love** 6:09
playing behind the legendary Abbey Lincoln
- 10 **Who Could Care?** 4:42
a swinging session with valve trombonist Bob Brookmeyer
- 11 **Night and Day** 8:09
his farewell performance, a duet with Kenny Barron

Total playing time 67:08

Cover photograph by Andy Freeberg

A Life in Jazz highlights the many creative peaks in Getz's distinguished career: his 1961 masterpiece, *Focus*, Eddie Sauter's brilliant marriage of jazz and strings; his crossover magic with the masters of bossa nova, Antonio Carlos Jobim and Astrud and João Gilberto; his marvelous collaborations with Bob Brookmeyer, Gary Burton, Chick Corea, Ella Fitzgerald, J. J. Johnson, Abbey Lincoln, and Jimmy Raney; and his beautiful valedictory duet with Kenny Barron. *A Life in Jazz* is released in conjunction with a new biography by Donald Maggin of the artist, available from William Morrow and Co.

Verve Interactive: <http://www.jazzonln.com/JAZZ/verve.htm>

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STAN GETZ

Stan Getz plays tenor saxophone on all tracks, accompanied by:

- 1 Night Rider** (Edward Ernest "Eddie" Sauter) 3:56
 Alan Martin, Gerald Tarack, others unknown (v); Jacob Glick (vla); Bruce Rogers, one unknown (cello); John Neves (b);
 Eddie Sauter (arr); Hershey Kay (cond).
 Recorded July 28, 1961 in New York City
 Original LP issue: *Focus* Verve V6-8412; on CD: 821 982-2
 Original recording produced by **Creed Taylor**
- 2 Billie's Bounce** (Charles Parker, Jr.) 7:57
 J. J. Johnson (tb) with Oscar Peterson (p); Herb Ellis (g);
 Ray Brown (b); Connie Kay (d).
 Recorded October 9, 1957 at the Shrine Auditorium, Los Angeles
 Original LP issue: *Stan Getz and J. J. Johnson at the Opera House* Verve MG V 8265;
 on CD: 831 272-2
 Original recording produced by **Norman Granz**
- 3 Corcovado (Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars)** 4:14
 (Antonio Carlos Jobim-Frederick Eugene John "Gene" Lees)
 João Gilberto (g, vcl) with Antonio Carlos Jobim (p);
 Tommy Williams (b); Milton Banana (d); Astrud Gilberto (vcl).
 Recorded March 18 or 19, 1963 in New York City
 Original LP issue: *Getz/Gilberto* Verve V6-8545; on CD: 810 048-2
 Original recording produced by **Creed Taylor**
- 4 Litha** (Anthony Armando "Chick" Corea) 8:28
 Chick Corea (p); Ron Carter (b); Grady Tate (d).
 Recorded March 21, 1967 at Van Gelder Recording Studio,
 Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey
 Original LP issue: *Sweet Rain* Verve V6-8693; on CD: 815 054-2
 Original recording produced by **Creed Taylor**

- 5 You're Blasé** (Ord Hamilton-Bruce Sievier) 3:56
 Ella Fitzgerald (vcl) with Frank DeVol's orchestra;
 personnel unknown; DeVol (arr, cond).
 Recorded October 15, 1957 in Los Angeles
 Original LP issue: *Ella Fitzgerald Like Someone in Love* Verve V6-4004; on CD: 314 511 524-2
 Original recording produced by **Norman Granz**
- 6 What Is This Thing Called Love?** (Cole Albert Porter) 9:47
 Kenny Barron (p); Rufus Reid (b); Victor Lewis (d).
 Recorded July 6, 1987 at the Montmartre Jazzhus, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Original CD issue: *Anniversary* EmArcy 838 769-2
 Original recording produced by **Ib Skovgaard**
- 7 Hymn of the Orient** (Basheer Quism fka "Gigi Gryce") 2:53
 Duke Jordan (p); Jimmy Raney (g); Bill Crow (b); Frank Isola (d).
 Recorded December 29, 1952 in New York City
 Original 10" LP issue: *Stan Getz Plays Clef* MGC 137; on CD: 833 535-2
 Original recording produced by **Norman Granz**
- 8 Summertime** (George Gershwin-DuBose Heyward) 6:57
 Gary Burton (vb); Gene Cherico (b); Joe Hunt (d).
 Recorded March 4, 1964 at Van Gelder Recording Studio,
 Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey
 Original CD issue: *Nobody Else but Me* Verve 314 521 660-2
 Original recording produced by **Creed Taylor**
- 9 I'm in Love** (Joan Griffin) 6:09
 Abbey Lincoln (vcl) with Hank Jones (p); Charlie Haden (b);
 Mark Johnson (d).
 Recorded February 25 or 26, 1991 at BMG Studios, New York City
 Original CD issue: *You Gotta Pay the Band* Verve 314 511 110-2
 Original recording produced by **Jean-Philippe Allard**
- 10 Who Could Care?** (Bob Brookmeyer) 4:42
 Bob Brookmeyer (vib) with Steve Kuhn (p);
 John Neves (b); Roy Haynes (d).
 Recorded September 11, 1961 in San Francisco
 Original LP issue: *Stan Getz and Bob Brookmeyer Quintet* Verve V6-8418
 Original recording produced by **Creed Taylor**
- 11 Night and Day** (Cole Porter) 8:09
 Kenny Barron (p).
 Recorded March 3, 4, 5, or 6, 1991 at the Montmartre Jazzhus, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Original CD issue: *People Time* Verve 314 510 823-2
 Original recording produced by **Jean-Philippe Allard**

A Life in Jazz

Nature provided Stan Getz with abundant talents for music: perfect pitch, an uncanny feel for rhythmic nuance, great sight-reading skills, and a photographic memory. These attributes, however, were not what made him a great artist. The essence of his art was the ability to create fresh and beautiful melodies in improvisation; he was a giant of instantaneous composition. He described improvisation as a way of conversing:

"It's like a language. You learn the alphabet, which is the scales. You learn sentences, which are the chords. And then you talk extemporaneously with the horn. It's a wonderful thing to *speak* extemporaneously, which is something I've never gotten the hang of. But musically I love to talk just off the top of my head. And that's what jazz music is all about."

He made his conversations particularly moving because he added to his gift for melody a mastery of a wide range of sound — whispers, cries, shouts, purrs, wails. And he always projected his notes with a personal timbre, a

poignant ache that penetrated to the listener's marrow.

Of the jazz greats who came to prominence in the decade following World War II, Getz's career most closely resembles, in shape and longevity, that of Sonny Rollins. These two were not innovators like Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, and Miles Davis — men who changed the very grammar of jazz — but creators who achieved greatness while expanding the boundaries of the music they inherited.

In a profession noted for creative burnout, Getz maintained the highest esthetic standards for more than forty-six years, from his first recorded solo on December 19, 1944, with the Stan Kenton Orchestra, to his final one in duet with Kenny Barron in Copenhagen on March 6, 1991. Over this span, he was recorded roughly three hundred times; despite decades of personal torment and turmoil, his playing on all but a handful of these occasions shines at the highest level.

His career had many peaks — his great big-band work, from "Early Autumn" in 1949 to "Apasionado" in 1990; his 1961 masterpiece, the

album *Focus*, the most successful marriage ever of jazz and strings; his artistry in working with Antonio Carlos Jobim, Astrud and João Gilberto, and Charlie Byrd to take bossa nova, a Brazilian genre, and make it a force that stirred millions worldwide; his marvelous collaborations with Jimmy Raney, Bob Brookmeyer, Gary Burton, Chick Corea, Jimmy Rowles, and Albert Dailey; and the magnificent quartet and duet recordings with Barron in his last decade, made while he conquered his addictions and other torments and fought a courageous four-year battle with cancer. He thrilled us, he healed us, and he always swung.

In the liner notes to *Another World*, his 1978 Columbia release, Getz wrote: "My life is music. And in some vague, mysterious, and subconscious way, I have always been driven by a taut inner spring which has propelled me to almost compulsively reach for perfection in music, often — in fact, mostly — at the expense of everything else in my life." All of us who love music can be thankful that from 1940, when his father bought him his first saxophone, until his death in 1991, Getz was driven by that "taut inner spring".

For *Focus*, Eddie Sauter wrote a seven-part classical suite for a small string orchestra.

The piece could have been played as a finished work by the orchestra, but Sauter left enough room for Getz to add, by ear, an improvised line. Getz was given an outline but otherwise no preparation for the session; he produced a masterwork. On **Night Rider** he evokes a kaleidoscope of emotion as he burns through the chord sequence. Getz believed that *Focus* was the best recording he ever made.

Getz's career received a strong boost when he signed on as a concert and recording artist with Norman Granz in 1952. This October 1957 recording of **Billie's Bounce**, a blues, catches Getz in one of Granz's JATP concerts with trombonist J. J. Johnson and the sterling rhythm section of Oscar Peterson, Herb Ellis, Ray Brown, and Connie Kay. The music is ebullient, with Getz and Johnson at their steaming, romping best. Granz kept Getz busy that October, recording him four other times, with Gerry Mulligan, Ella Fitzgerald, and Peterson's trio as well as with Herb Ellis's quintet.

Corcovado (Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars), from the album *Getz/Gilberto*, brings Getz together with the Brazilian heavyweights of bossa nova — Antonio Carlos Jobim and Astrud and João Gilberto. João's dusky vocals and subtly chorded guitar rhythms create a sweet tension with Astrud's projections of erotic innocence on this Jobim song. Getz's sax and Jobim's piano provide affectionate, caressing support. *Getz/Gilberto* won the Grammy® for Album of the Year and was a huge pop hit, outselling all 1964 albums except the Beatles' *Hard Day's Night*. It made Getz a rich man.

Getz called Chick Corea "the finest musician who ever came from any of the bands I put together". Corea lives up to the accolade on this recording of his tune **Litha**, where he and Getz explore the outer limits of harmony and meter. Everything sounds freshly minted as the two men improvise fiercely and with great freedom.

You're Blasé, on which Getz accompanies Ella Fitzgerald, was created during his wonderfully productive month of October 1957. Fitzgerald, then thirty-nine, was at the

peak of her powers and, with almost careless ease, provides a rich, singing, and subtly sculpted interpretation of this witty song. Getz entwines his phrases impeccably with hers and follows with a robust and warmly romantic solo.

Summertime was one of ten tunes recorded at a 1964 session. The tapes were then shelved, because recording executives did not wish them to compete head-on with Getz's blockbuster bossa nova hits. The music got lost in the shuffle, gathered dust in Verve warehouses for three decades, and was released only in 1994.¹ Getz's "Summertime" is a gem, an interpretation that rivals Miles Davis's and John Coltrane's versions as the definitive modern jazz performance of Gershwin's song. Gary Burton, age twenty-one and at the start of a brilliant career, supports Getz with buoyant cushions of sound and offers an inventive solo of his own.

Abbey Lincoln asked Getz to accompany her on the album that yielded

¹The music may not have been much of a revelation last year — *Getz au Go-Go*, issued in 1964, has a performance of "Summertime" with the same arrangement. — Ed.

I'm in Love, because she felt a special rapport with him: "He understood everything that was in my heart . . . That album's my first hit album. And I know it's because of Stan." As they mesh their voices and hearts on this piece, Getz and Lincoln engage in a warm and witty dialogue at a bright tempo; his solo is extroverted and incisive, a declamatory exercise.

When Getz returned in 1961 from a thirty-one-month Scandinavian sojourn, he had three immediate artistic goals — to form a new quartet, to commission Eddie Sauter to write a piece for him, and to record again with Bob Brookmeyer, a collaborator for whom he felt the deepest empathy. The reunion with the valve trombonist resulted in an outstanding session that yielded **Who Could Care?** As Getz lightened his sound to meld with Raney's guitar, he thickened and deepened it to blend with the timbres

of Brookmeyer's instrument. They create a poignant interpretation of Brookmeyer's gorgeous ballad.

Getz was dying of cancer and fighting both pain and exhaustion when he recorded **Night and Day**. The music bears no trace of Getz's illness; it is vigorous and feisty and full of humor. Getz described Kenny Barron as "the other half of my heart", and the pianist's spirit seems uncannily bonded to Getz's as they sail through the piece together. The principal emotion they convey is joy — joy in mastery, joy in connecting with an audience, joy in invention, and joy in swinging. Getz died three months later on June 6, 1991, at age sixty-four.

Donald L. Maggin

October 1995

Donald L. Maggin is the author of *Stan Getz: A Life in Jazz* (William Morrow, New York, 1996).

.....Compilation.....

Supervised by **Aric Lach Morrison** • Selected and sequenced by **Donald L. Maggin** • Researched by **Ben Young** • Mastered by **Gary N. Mayo** at PolyGram Studios • Notes edited by **Peter Pullman** • Production assistance by **Marina Detienne** and **Jessica Raimi** • Art designed and directed by **Wendi Traub-Cohen** • Design coordinated by **Nichell Delvaille** • Cover photograph by **Andy Freeberg** • Inside photographs by **Herman Leonard** • Cover designed by **Richard Aquan** Special thanks to **Beverly McGovern**, **Phil Schaap**, **Jeanmarie Houlihan** and **Paul Bresnick** (William Morrow and Co.), the Institute of Jazz Studies, and the staff at PolyGram Studios Executive producer: **Richard Seidel**

.....A Brief History of Verve.....

In 1944 Norman Granz promoted his first concert, a benefit held at the Philharmonic Auditorium in Los Angeles. The live recording, issued in 1946, was a prototype of swinging jazz in concert, known as Jazz at the Philharmonic.

After his initial labels, Clef and Norgran, had been established, Granz inaugurated Verve Records in 1956 — and he brought these earlier efforts under the Verve banner. The Verve catalog grew through the Fifties and Sixties to include most of the major figures in jazz.

Verve, which now incorporates the Mercury Records/EmArcy jazz catalog, is devoted to reissuing its classics on CD while continuing to record major talent producing new jazz classics today.

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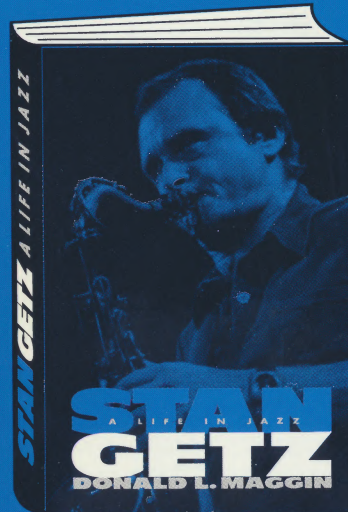
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Stan Getz: A Life in Jazz, the companion biography to this CD, is written by Donald L. Maggin — available from William Morrow and Co.

The definitive biography
of the jazz legend



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STAN A LIFE IN JAZZ: A MUSICAL BIOGRAPHY GETZ



COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

314 535 119-2

- 1 Night Rider • 3 1/2 • 3 Bounce
3 Corcovado (Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars)
4 Litha • 5 You're Blasé
6 What Is This Thing Called Love?
7 Hymn of the Orient • 8 Summertime
9 I'm in Love • 10 Who Could Care?
11 Night and Day

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